

AWFUL SHADOWS.

The Vision that Frightened Bob Angel.

A crime had been committed in Mississippi. One lovely evening in May, as a rosy twilight was stealing on, a little girl dragged herself to her mother's door. She had been gathering wild violets and yellow jasmine along the brook—a favorite pastime—and intended to decorate her mother's humble mantleshaft, but she had been gone a long time. Her large blue eyes were blood-shot, and a dark shadow appeared beneath them; her flaxen hair was disheveled, and the marks of brutal fingers stood out with inflamed prominence on her tender throat. She could not climb the steps, and called, faintly and piteously:

"Mother!"

The woman rose from her chair, dropped her scissors and spoons, threw her work on the floor, and gazed at her child, stupefied and horror-stricken. She caught her up and pressed her to her heart, moaning:

"My poor baby! my poor baby! O my God! my God!"

That night the child died—as dies a tender flower that has been plucked and crushed in a strong, cruel hand and thrown aside to perish. Lying there on the couch, she seemed as pure as a hope of heaven, as beautiful as a dream.

A chilling horror fell like a pall upon the people for miles around. Women, pale and frightened, left their homes to find better security in a neighbor's house, and they huddled together like sheep that know a wolf is near. Mounted men, and men on foot, were scouring the forests all night, and toward morning they brought in a negro. He was the criminal.

There is a crime that in the South ranks side by side with the foulest murder, both in the meaning of the law and in the hearts of the people. Female security is as powerful a principle as human life. But there is a difference. In the latter case it sometimes happens that a man escapes the gallows for a life term in the penitentiary; in the former, there is the gallows at the hands of a jury, or the rope, knife, or pistol at the hands of a mob. There is no escape—death follows in the footsteps of transgression.

The younger and more hot-blooded men insisted on a speedy termination of the tragedy, but other counsels prevailed. Here was a rare opportunity for a display of devilish skill, horrible ingenuity, and cruel refinement. To hang the wretch would be commonplace and vulgar; to cut his throat would be butchery. These were threatening sentiments, and showed a feeling unyielding, unrelenting, and dark and unfathomable as perdition.

"Bob Angel goes down to-night, don't he?"

"Yes—on the 93."

"At 11:45?"

"At 11:45."

"I think we had better send him down on Bob's engine."

"Why?"

"Tain't worth while to palaver. You know Bob? He's very keeful."

The prisoner was held until the freight train pulled up at the station. When Bob Angel descended from the engine cab he was followed by his negro fireman. The latter had evidently just finished his supper, for he was wiping the grease from his shining lips and chin with the back of his hand, which he in turn wiped on his hips. He procured the oil-can and torch and was "oiling up," as a long run between stations was ahead. This negro had a neck like a bull's; he was somewhat knock-kneed, and had splay feet of enormous size; he was large and strong, and could crack hickory-nut between his teeth like a hog. His name was "Ole Bony," which, however, was not an abbreviation of Bonaparte. He was thus called because he disdained to eat the meat only of chickens surreptitiously obtained. He ate bones and all.

"I'll turn him over to Bony," said Angel; "not that I mind doing it myself, but Bony will enjoy it so much."

"Is he safe?"

"Safe! why he'd rather do it than play his old fiddle or dance all night with his Dinah."

Bony was called aside and the crime revealed to him.

"An' dat's de nigger dar what tuck an' went an' done it, eh?"

"Yes."

"Wotcher gwine ter do wid 'im?"

"Well, you see, Bony, we're going to take him down on the engine, and I reckon you might let him get away, you know."

"Git erway! Whof-faw?"

"You infernal thick-headed ape! I've a good mind to brain you with the monkey-wrench!"

"Oh! Oh! Hy-a-hya!" ejaculated and chuckled Ole Bony. "Jess lemme 'lone now 'bout er minute. Hit's mighty suddent, an' I wants ter stedy de situation. Oh! but awn de Mas'sippi fo' de wah we use ter do hit elegant," and Bony's right hand came out of his pocket, his head went a little backward and to one side; the gesture was made with the palm outward, and expressed the most crushing and overpowering superiority. "Pulled out de stow-er-ways from de holes 'twix de cotton-bales, tore dey shirts open ter-fore, an' ef de small-pox wus er-showin' up fine on dey bresses, w'y dey'd git er bath."

"Get a bath! How's that?"

"Now, jess lis'n at 'im—an' you tole me I is er thick-headed ape! You dunner how ter foller de 'cusations uv my observations."

Bony went to one side and "studied the situation," pondering deeply. Angel eyed him closely, endeavoring to decipher every expression as an index of the thoughts that gathered under the woolly pate of the negro. Bony was sitting on the end of a cross-tie, his elbows resting on his knees, and his grimy fingers interlocked. He was bare-headed, and he softly tapped the ground with his long feet, slowly and alternately. His head was bent and his eyes were half closed. After sitting a few minutes he arose and shook himself like a dog that has been asleep. He looked grave, but as he had solved a difficult problem he could not resist the temptation to "cut the pigeon wing" for a few seconds on the platform alongside the track. After this he went to a telegraph pole and rubbed his back against it to disturb the operations of a bee between his shoulders.

"Fyar's me!" he said.

They gave him a bottle of whisky. He took out the cork,

smelled the liquor, climbed into the cab, opened the locker on the left side—his seat while on duty—extracted a small parcel containing brown sugar, and poured a considerable quantity into the bottle. He shook the mixture vigorously, and finally held it up to examine the "bead." The inspection seemed to satisfy him, for he drank deeply and smacked his lips with profound satisfaction. He then placed the bottle carefully in the locker.

The prisoner was placed in the tender in a sitting posture, his back against the pile of wood, and his face turned toward the locomotive. His hands were tied behind him, and his legs were bound together at the knees and ankles. A gag was in his mouth. Bob Angel pulled open the throttle-valve, and the train slowly dragged its length into the night; and all that could be seen by those left behind were two eyes that stared back at them from the last car. One of these eyes was green, the other red. They were the rear signal lights.

"I b'lieve I's de boss o' dis yer shop fur er-while, ain't I, Cap'n?"

"Yes, I believe so," replied Angel.

Without another word Ole Bony went to the wood-pile and commenced to pitch the fuel to the front of the tender. Having done this, he began to pile it up on the foot-board in two separate heaps. One contained the rich, resinous pine, and the other the oak and hickory. He then opened the fire-door, and was throwing in the pine rapidly, as if his life depended on it.

"You had better mix it, Bony," suggested Angel.

"Ain't I er-chunkin' o' dis yer engine?" retorted Bony, somewhat testily. "Ain't I de boss, anyhow? You jess keep yer eye in front, an' ten' ter yer own bizness."

When he had filled the fire-box he rested, and amused himself by singing snatches of old plantation songs and break-downs, as visions of the dear old fiddle arose in his memory; and at length sang melodiously:

"Chicken in de bread tray,

Scratchin' but dough,

Granny, will yer dog bite?

'No, chile, no!"

He ceased, anxiously watched the steam gauge, and then said:

"Golly! she's er-crawlin' up. Set dat air reverse lever back er couple o' notches. Hundred 'n' forty an' ain't blowin' off? Set de pop-valve at er hundred 'n' fifty, an' let 'er rip! Shove in de throttle a little bit—we's gwine down bill lack er cullud sister gitt'n 'ligion."

He again opened the fire-door, and found the pine being rapidly consumed, the flames seething and roaring. He threw in the oak and hickory, the pine having sunk to give it room, and resumed his seat, remarking:

"Hot 'nough dreckly ter roast er hog purty quick."

In a few minutes the train was approaching Chickasawhay swamp. Ole Bony said:

"I spec' she's gitt'n 'dry dorred—kin feel 'er er-bumpin' er little. Take de can an' go outside 'n' tech up dem steam-box valves. Drap er bit on de piston rods 'n' slid'n rods, an'—an'—fore you go, dough, I wants you ter help me tie 'im ter dat board, kaze he's gitt'n resty, 'n' moult git er-way. De board 'll keep 'im straight, you see, an' he won't double hisself up 'n' torment hisself ef he tries ter git er-way. Hit 'll make 'im stiff like, you understand. Keep a pert look-out on de track, an'—you kin come back—in er-bout—five minnits."

The helpless prisoner—secured to the board as Bony directed, and Angel crawled through the window, neglecting, however, to take the oil-can—but that was no matter. Ole Bony had thrown in more pine, and the locomotive was belching forth a cloud of black smoke, which trailed out over the train like the tail of an inky comet. The glaring, staring, Cyclopean eye of the engine was boring and tunneling the darkness, plowing a path through the night for the passage of the head and body to which it belonged. Looking backward, Bob Angel saw a vision that made his heart stand still, and he grasped the hand-rail more firmly, that a sudden sickness might not cause him to fall.

This is what he saw: The fire-door had been thrown open, and the intense light therefrom streamed upon the black cloud of smoke, and upon the dense foliage by the wayside, as upon a screen on which would be projected the shadows of interposing bodies. And he did see strange shadows, magnified into gigantic proportions—frightful shadows they were, that surged through the forest or were suspended in the smoke. It seemed to Angel that the gate of hell was open, and that the shadows he saw were made by demons dancing before the sulphurous flames and reveling in a saturnalia of blood. One demon, larger and more frightful than the others, ten times as ferocious, a thousand times as hideous, with short legs and gigantic body, with a round head, and neck like a bull's, with arms as long as the wings of a wind-mill; this monster, this king among demons, seemed to have just returned from earth, for he bore in his arms what might have been a human soul, lashed to a board. It seemed from the shadows that he laid his helpless victim at the edge of the opening through which issued the blinding rays from the unquenchable fire, and that he raised his arms in wild exultation, as though invoking the blessing of Satan for having performed his work so faithfully. This monster, while every muscle and bone seemed to expand into distended proportions, grasped his burden and raised it aloft—the flames seemed to roar and crackle hungrily, and gaped longingly for the soul they were to devour. The brilliancy of the light was suddenly obscured. Something must have been thrown through the orifice—through the gate of hell—but the intensity was immediately resumed, displaying the demon bending over, his great, naked arm stretched across the opening, as if reaching to close the gate; then suddenly the shadows became confused—some toppling and falling to the ground, others chasing each other beyond the vision, into the forest—and all was darkness again.

OAKLAND, July 14, 1879.

W. C. MORROW, JR.

To the admirers of Shakespeare and *Hamlet* it may be interesting to know that a work has recently been published in London entitled *A Throw for a Throne*, in which "Hamlet" is made out to be a liar, thief, forger, brigand and murderer, and his uncle shown to be full of "sacred emotions" and "humbleness of spirit," acting at first toward his guilty, ambitious nephew with affectionate and wise solicitude, and at last "delegating his judicial office * * * to the weapon or the injured son and brother, 'Laertes.'"

THE OLD SON'S REPLY.

He Presents a Few Specimen Bricks of Worldly Wisdom.

AT FRISBIE'S, RAWHIDE, July 12, 1879.

OL' PARD:—I'm lookin' at ye, pard; it was out o' the demijohn under the candle-boxes, the one 'tith the B. B. brand onto it, Frisbie's best—ye know the pison, Jim! An' so yer hevin' a gay o' spree down ther 'tith the sports an' sharps, eh? Well, go it, o' boy, an' don't furgit to set 'em up fur ol' Bill Belcher w'enver ye draw to fill. I'm sorry ye let them town-lot sharps play it so low down on ye, but ez ye drifted fur a crossin' an' struck dike after the lead hed ptered, the best thing fur ye to do is to hunt fur another thread, mebbe it'll throw a pocket somewhere else. Speakin' o' Si Comstock, w'y don't ye give the case to one o' them Oaklan' detectives? They're the boys ez knows whar to look fur hard cases—w'en they wants to find 'em. All them Oaklan' perleece fellers hez to do w'en they makes up ther mind to ketch thieves an' burglars, an' sich, is to go to some o' the burglar's pards an' ask 'em whar Mister Thief hez histed himself to, an' the pard tells him right off, bein' a born fool. Ye ken allers tell a cop by his blue ulster 'tith six gilt buttons down the front. The bes' place to run against a Oaklan' peeler is on the corner o' Broadway an' Seventh, whar the steam keers stop; ther's generally three or four loafin' roun' on the shady side o' the street watchin' the little kids jump on an' off the keers ez they're goin' by. But ye'll hev to hunt a long time afore ye crawl up on one o' them Oaklan' detectives, cause nobody knows 'em 'ceptin' the thieves, an' they keep a long distance away from each other. The bes' place to hunt fur a Oaklan' detective is 'tithin leg reach o' the stove in the captain's office at the City Hall. You browse 'round an' roust out one o' them detectives, an' ef ye'll tell him some runnin' pard o' Si Comstock's he'll find out ef the pard knows whar Si is; an' ef the pard turns him up mebbe Si won't hev coin enough to buy off, an' ye'll git yer works in on the coyote. The widdar says she hopes ye won't git tangled up 'tith any o' those high-fliers down to the Bay. She says she can't abide the style they sling w'en they passes through this camp goin' over to Yer Semite. Tain't no disgrace, she says, that a gal's dad sold weevily butcut an' four-pound blankets to the soldiers durin' the war, an' cleaned up enough to run his face at a dry goods shop fur silks an' furs, but w'en sich folks piles on the dog 'oo thick it makes her want to git up an' snort. An' 'cause the ol' man's made a strike in the Comstocks, an' the ol' woman's quit takin' in washin' or laid her dressnakin' sign on the top shelf o' the cupboard, it's no reason the gals should refuse to notice the folks the ol' woman worked fur in the ol' times. I tell ye w'at, Jim, the widdar's a brick; but, Lord! she's ez jealous ez an ol' maid thet's jess bin popped to, an's makin' up her mind fur a red hot sparkin'. An', Jim, the widdar's dead right. Don't ye go makin' an everlastin' fool o' yerself splicin' onto any o' them female check guerrillas down to the Bay—they're snide nine times out o' ten, an' 'll marry ye to git a divorce from ye six months arter. They'll play the alimony game, an' the division o' property racket on ye, like my ol' woman did twenty year ago, an' break ye up like thet piece o' caliker did me. Ef yer on the marry—which I hope ye ain't—hire out to some bonanza duck ez a coachman; you ken play the game too fine, knowin' all 'bout hosses—an' ef ye plays yer keers right Miss Bonanza 'll climb down an' forty-round ladder some dark night to fall onto yer manly buzzum. I've bin keepin' posted on these things, an' I see by the noose-papers that this is the true bizness juss now. But ye musn't go it blind, ez it were; no shoutin' 'bout yer sack, an' no sportin' yer specimen breastplates. Ye musn't give yerself away by sendin' in moss agate rings an' striped stockin's to the gal, 'cause then, ye see, 'twon't be no true love bizness. O' course she'll climb down the ladder all the same—she'd jump out of a four-story window ef she couldn't git to ye no other way—but w'en the honeymoon an' the huggin' time's over she'll grab fur yer sack an' jump yer bed an' board jess ez ef ye'd planked down the coin an' bought her fur cash in the reg'lar way. Mebbe after yer've played the hoss jockey game, an' yer tied hard 'n' fast, it'd be a good idee to starve the gal fur a year or two. Tell her times is hard an' the hoss bizness is at a discount. Purten ye can't make the raffle on a job no-whar, an' make her feed on one meal a day—mush 'n' milk 'n' a hunk o' bread 's good diet—an' bunk her in the top story o' one o' them cheap lodgin' houses in Frisco for a year or two. It'll do her good, an' she'll think the more ef ye w'en ye move down to the second story o' thet lodgin' house an' she gits two squar meals a day. Ef she chips 'bout divorces or alimony after thet, Jim, I pass my hand in the game o' human nacher. An' besides, mebbe afore ye begin to ease up on the poverty racket the ol' man 'll come to time an' provide fur his sufferin' darter, an' ye'll save thet much. Ther's nothin' like a fine game, Jim, in the love bizness—ye hear me—an' I'm the best friend ye've got. I tof' Sandy w'at ye said 'bout the chin ye hed 'tith them Zaminer chaps, an' he want's ye to ask 'em wether we'd better go it straight on a county ticket, or try to make a winnin' 'tith the Bilks. An', Jim, jess ask them Zaminer ducks ef they won't be kind enough to hist the genoine Dimmycratic State ticket up to the head o' the slasher columns. Tell 'em the boys down to Frisbie's is true blue an' don't want to git sucked in. So long.

Ye ol' pard, BILL BELCHER.

To JAMES SNAGGLEBY, Oakland, care of Phil. Raglin.

Leave your grievances, as Napoleon did his letters, unheeded for three weeks, and it is astonishing how few of them, by that time, will require heeding.

LXXXVIII.—Sunday, July 20.—Bill of Fare for Six Persons.

Soup, Madras Mullagatawney.
Melon.
Shrimp Salad.
Frogs, with Mushrooms and Truffles, cooked with white sauce and served in paper cases.
Lima Beans. Corn Fritters.
Roast Beef. Baked Potatoes.
Tomato Salad.
Strawberries, Whipped Cream.
Orange Cake.
Fruit-bowl of Peaches, Pears, Appricots, Cherries, Apples, Plums, Green Gages, Figs, and Grapes.

To MAKE MAORAS MULLAGATAWNEY.—See Vol. I, No. 28.

To MAKE CURRY POWDER.—Black pepper, five ounces; cayenne, one ounce; cardamom, seed, thirteen ounces; fennel seed, three ounces; turmeric, ounces. These must all be procured in powder.